

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office
FLOOR DEBATE

May 24, 2001

LB 536

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: Thank you, Mr. President. Members of the body, we've had a little bit of discussion on LB 536 and this is the last amendment filed, as you can see, and hopefully this will be the one that will be acceptable to everyone. In a nutshell, what this last amendment does is five-tenths...this first motion, of course, will be to return, but the motion would be for a five-tenths checkoff for eight years, eighteen cents per gallon for eight years for ethanol production, and a million and a half General Funds for seven years. This...we've had...I'm not going to go into a lot of detail and a lot of discussion, because I think you're aware of most of the discussion we've had on the promotion and encouragement of production of ethanol in Nebraska. This is quite a bit different than the original bill that was introduced, quite a bit different from the amendments that we've had. We've had lots of discussions with this and I think that this is something that should be satisfactory. It does reduce the General Fund exposure to quite an extent. It does continue a half-cent checkoff for those that produce corn, and it does reduce the amount of per gallon incentive from 20 cents to 18 cents. Hopefully, that this will meet the approval of the body and I'd ask to return to Select File for this amendment. Thank you.

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Thank you, Senator Wehrbein. On the motion to return LB 536 to Select File, Senator Kremer.

SENATOR KREMER: Thank you, Mr. President and members. I would just like to add my support to the motion to return. I think this does include all the aspects of the bill that would improve it. It does take the (inaudible) grains off, reduces the incentive to 18 cents but also extends it for one more year so it comes out pretty neutral on that area, but it does also lower the General Funds request. One area that I'd like to just point out is that historically for the checkoffs we had before, it's been a 50-50 share with General Funds and checkoff money. This one is down to where now it is only 20 percent approximately for or from the General Funds and 80 percent from corn checkoffs. So the corn growers, it's quite a step for them and I don't know if they are completely satisfied with it, but I think they are willing to do it in order to see some ethanol plants be...be